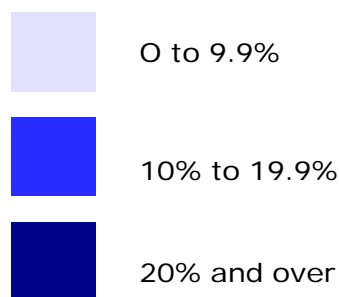
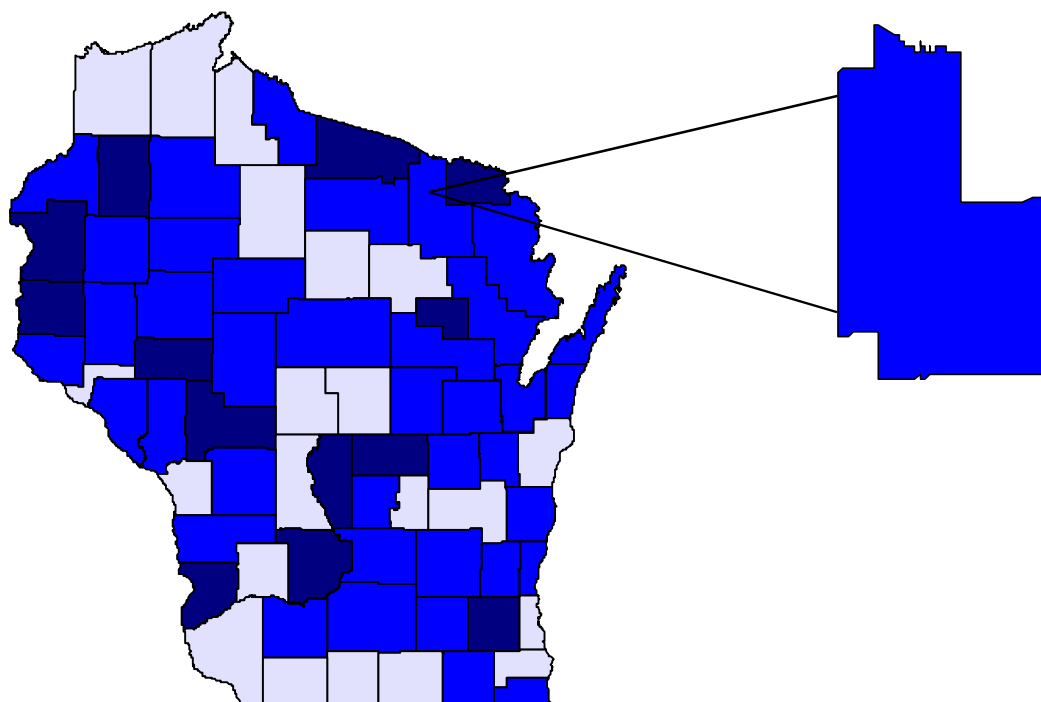


Forest County Workforce Profile

Job Growth 1994 to 1999



Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development
Division of Workforce Solutions
Bureau of Workforce Information
October 2001



State of Wisconsin
Department of Workforce Development

Introduction

The County Workforce Profile has been developed by the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development's (DWD) Bureau of Workforce Information (BWI) to provide a broad overview of Forest County's labor market. The data included in this fourth year of publication is for 1999 to maintain consistency with the previous publications and to provide the user with a single year of reference in order to draw comparisons and form a picture of related labor force and employment information.

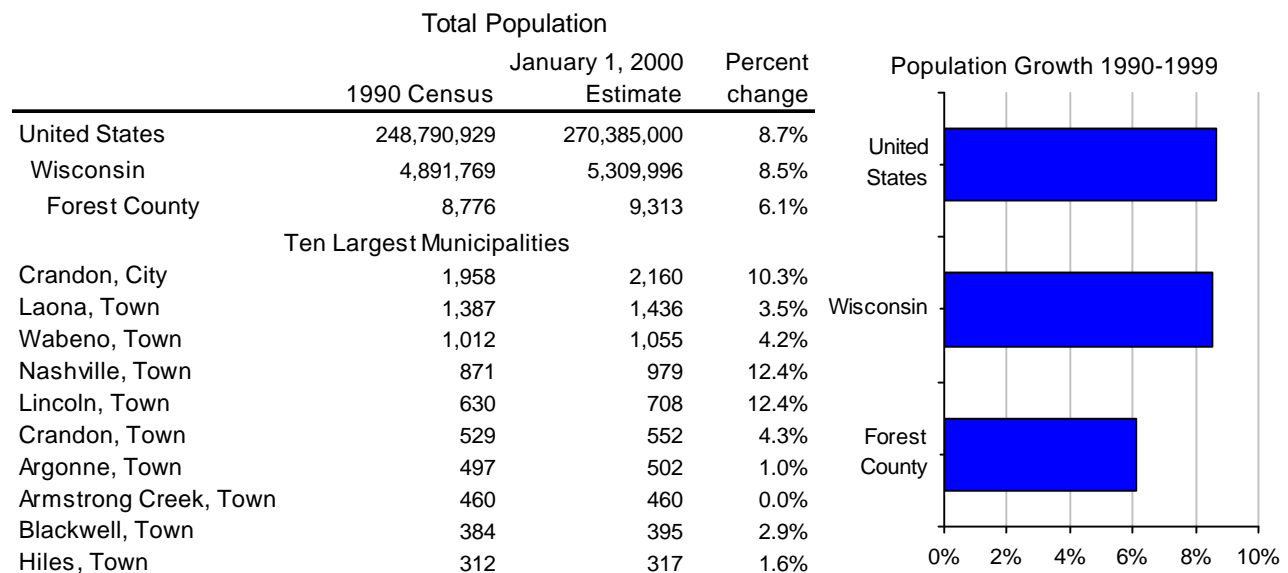
A variety of economic and demographic labor market information have been provided to describe the current labor market conditions in the counties and regions of Wisconsin. That information includes 1999 data on population, labor force, industries, employment, wages and income. The narrative describes how local conditions have changed over one-year and five-year intervals. Although population information is available from the 2000 census, it is not included in this publication since the period of time selected for all data sets is 1999. For more recent releases of information please consult the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development Labor Market Information website: <http://www.dwd.state.wi.us/lmi>.

For more detailed information or clarification, please contact your local labor market analyst, Dennis Goodwin, by telephone (715-261-7745) or email (goodwd@dwd.state.wi.us).

DWD is an equal opportunity service provider. If you need assistance to access services or material in an alternate format, please contact the analyst listed above.

Forest County Population and Civilian Labor Force

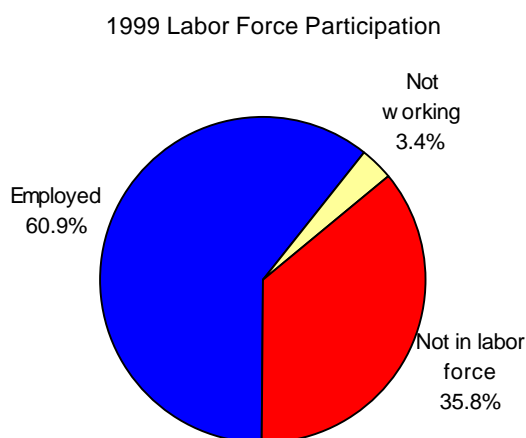
The rate of population growth of Forest County is slower than that of either Wisconsin or the United States. In the eight years from 1990 and 1999, only about 530 people will have been added to the population total of the county. Compared to some other areas this lower number is somewhat typical of the more sparsely populated counties of the northern part of the state, where population increase is usually due more to natural increase than to in-migration. Similarly, the towns of the county show little increase in the period mentioned, and some of the smaller areas have actually lost people.



Source: WI Dept. of Admin., Demographic Services Center, *Official Population Estimates*, January 1, 2000

People who are not working include people who are unemployed and people who are not in the labor force. Unemployed does not include all people who are not working. Some people who are not working are not technically unemployed. Examples of people who are not working but who are not unemployed are retirees or people who choose not to work. Between 1994 and 1999, the labor force in Forest County increased by about 200 people. Certainly, this is not large by some county standards, but is healthy enough growth for a northern rural county.

The term used to describe the relationship between the labor force and population is the participation rate. A somewhat higher number of people in the population of Forest County seem to be out of the labor force, but not an unusually high number. This may be due to a somewhat higher number of retired people in this county and other northern counties in recent years. Almost 61 percent of Forest County's labor force age population are working with just over 3 percent of that population unemployed. This percentage changes with the seasons, of course. One thing to remember is that this rate of unemployment is historically very low for Forest or any of the northern counties.



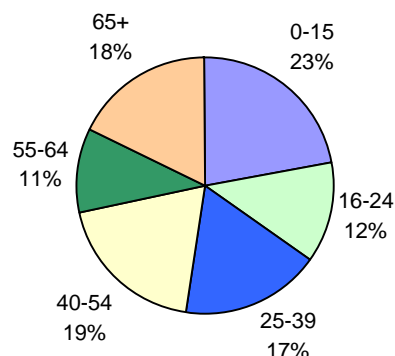
Source: Estimated from WI Dept of Administration population estimates, Jan 2000, US Census Bureau, and Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The 38 percent increase in labor force aged population between the ages of 40 and 54 is the result of the aging of baby-boomers. Of major significance to employers has been the slow growth in the number of younger workers. Slow growth in the number of 16 to 24 year olds (about 4.4 percent) and an increase in the number of businesses which traditionally hire large numbers of young workers has contributed to the current labor shortage in Forest County. This tight labor situation will not be changing any time soon and will be felt most keenly by the many small businesses of the area.

Forest County Labor Force Age Population Distribution

Age Group	Population		Percent change
	1990 Census	1999 Estimate	
0-15	2,061	2,074	0.6%
16-24	1,111	1,160	4.4%
25-39	1,717	1,618	-5.7%
40-54	1,302	1,798	38.1%
55-64	929	1,005	8.1%
65+	1,656	1,658	0.1%

Source: Estimated from WI Dept of Admin, Demographic Services Center, Official Population Projections 1990-2020 and US Census Bureau



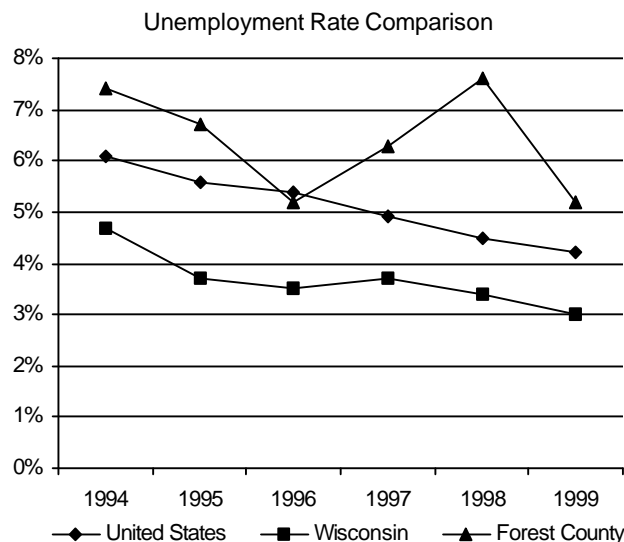
Forest County Civilian Labor Force Data

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Labor Force	4,200	4,400	4,700	4,600	4,600	4,400
Employed	3,900	4,100	4,400	4,300	4,300	4,200
Unemployed	310	290	240	290	350	230
Unemployment Rate	7.4%	6.7%	5.2%	6.3%	7.6%	5.2%

Source: WI DWD, Bureau of Workforce Information, Local Area Unemployment Statistics

In the most general terms, Forest County is part of, or most closely resembles, the other northern counties of the state; a less dense population compared to southern counties, smaller manufacturing element in the industrial picture, and a more important emphasis on tourism and related businesses. Often, the northern counties have felt economic fluctuations more keenly than other areas. But in recent years, the employment picture in Forest County has been a rather good one.

The rate of unemployment has dropped about 2.2 percent between 1994 and 1999, with an increase in employment in that period of more than 300 jobs. This is not an insignificant number for an area the size of Forest County.



Source: WIDWD, Bureau of Workforce Information, Local Area Unemployment Statistics

Forest County Commuting Patterns

(Note - Although these 1990 Census Commuting numbers have not yet been updated by the recent Census, we do not anticipate any significant changes in the general pattern of movement.)

From a total labor force of 4,600 in Forest County in 1996, about 530 leave the county each day to work elsewhere. More of these commuting workers drive to Oneida county than to any other, about 200 or

so. Those entering Forest County from Oneida is less than half that number.

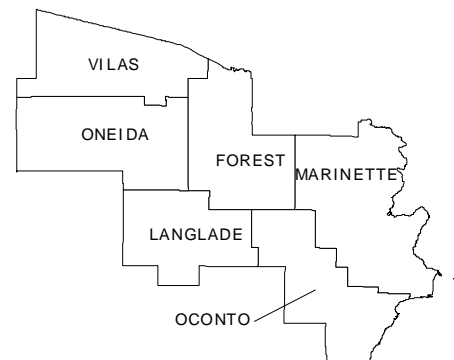
It is impossible to say what kinds of jobs these workers are commuting to, or what their professions are. They may be stable, permanent types of jobs, such as professional employment, or perhaps jobs in the manufacturing in a neighboring county. Or, they are the kinds of jobs that typically take a person some distance from his or her home, like seasonal construction work. However, construction

Forest County Commuting Patterns

	Commute Into	Commute From	Net Commute
Oneida	212	86	-126
Langlade	56	36	-20
Oconto	38	49	11
Marinette	19	19	0
Vilas	27	7	-20
Worked Elsewhere	181	40	-141
Total	533	237	-296

Work within Forest County 2,598

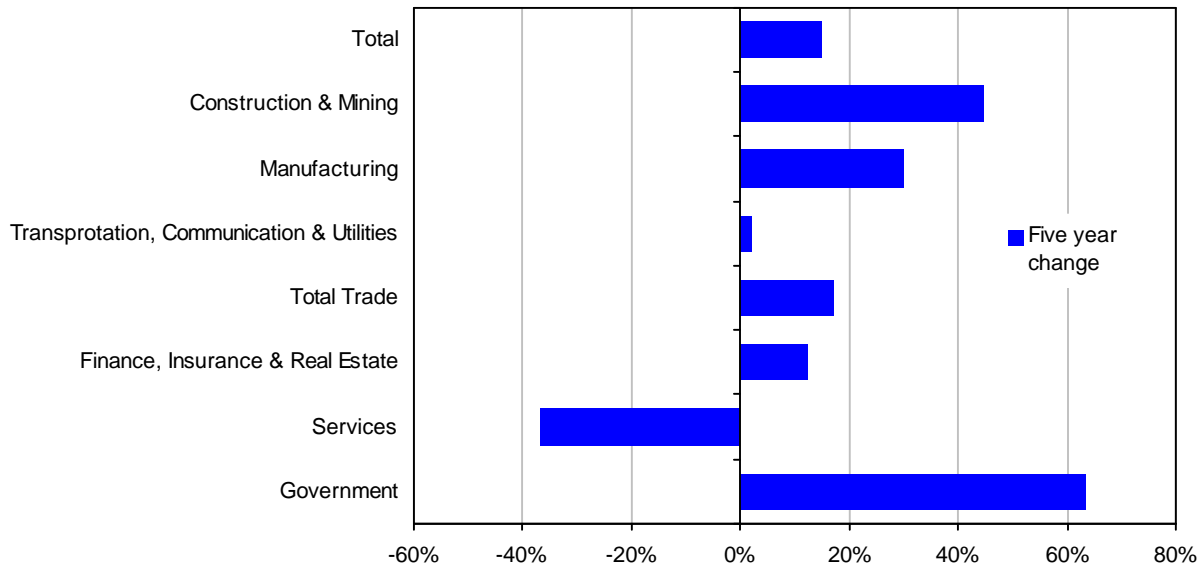
Source: WIDWD, Bureau of Workforce Information. *Wisconsin's Commuting Patterns*, 1994.



employment has seldom registered more than 100 jobs total in Forest County in the last few years, and many of these jobs could be outside of the county.

More than 500 workers leaving the county for jobs each day is actually a rather large number, when compared to other areas of the state, where the majority of the working labor force works within only a few miles of home. What this would appear to indicate about Forest County is that relatively high paying, full time employment is found more easily outside the county than within. These higher paying jobs justify a fairly lengthy commute for many. Indeed, employment in the trade and service sectors outnumber those in manufacturing by a good deal. If it is assumed that jobs in trade and service are typically lower paying than those in manufacturing, as well as having a greater number of part time positions, this may account for the higher than usual numbers of workers commuting each day.

Forest County Employment Change by Industry 1994 to 1999



	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	Percent change	
Total	2,704	2,830	3,041	3,041	3,041	3,108	2.2%	15.0%
Goods Producing	428	464	558	506	523	565	8.1%	31.9%
Construction & Mining	49	46	57	68	69	71	2.8%	44.7%
Manufacturing	379	418	501	438	453	494	8.9%	30.2%
Durable	372	359	393	420	434	477	10.0%	28.4%
Nondurable	7	58	108	17	19	16	-15.2%	126.0%
Service Producing	2,276	2,366	2,483	2,536	2,518	2,543	1.0%	11.8%
Transportation, Communications & Utilities	213	222	242	236	220	217	-1.3%	2.1%
Total Trade	426	466	492	489	468	500	6.7%	17.2%
Wholesale	43	46	50	49	47	44	-5.7%	2.3%
Retail	383	420	443	440	421	455	8.1%	18.9%
Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate	82	69	72	83	91	92	0.2%	12.4%
Services & Misc.	804	887	969	978	759	507	-33.2%	-37.0%
Total Government	751	722	707	750	980	1,228	25.4%	63.6%

Source: WIDWD, Bureau of Workforce Information, Nonfarm Wage & Salary estimates.

Nonfarm wage and salary employment measures the number of jobs within a county excluding military, and self-employed workers. This data measures the number of jobs within the county without consideration of where the job-holder lives. Thus, this information is often referred to as "place of work" data.

When one looks at the employment picture in Forest County by industry over the period 1994 - 1999, some employment levels increased. There was a significant decline in job levels in the service sector, and only a very small increase in transportation and public utilities employment. It is not clear what those businesses were in service that may have shrunk, or at least did not hire any more people over the period in question.

The employment picture of Forest County bears watching in the years to come as present employment trends indicate possible problems in that labor market, most particularly rather small growth in trade employment. This is somewhat unusual anywhere and is especially unusual in an area with an important tourist element. Manufacturing and construction have moved up at good pace, with the latter reflecting the construction "boom" of recent years throughout the district.

Forest County's Largest Industries and Employers

Top 10 Industry Groups

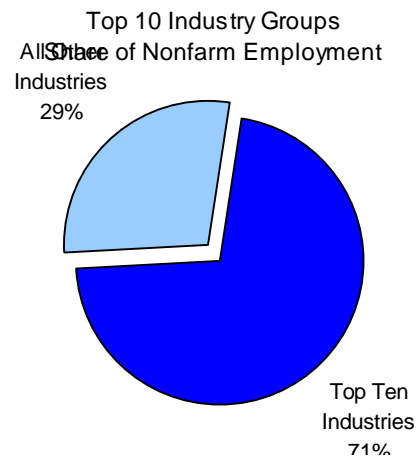
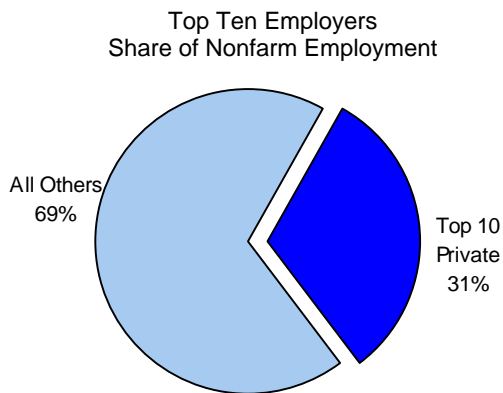
Industry Group	March 2000		Numerical Change	
	Employers	Employment	1 Year	5 Years
Lumber And Wood Products	28	381	-16	92
Membership Organizations	*	*	*	*
Educational Services	5	344	-14	31
Health Services	9	241	-1	41
Executive, Legislative, And General	14	221	-27	-10
Amusement & Recreation Services	*	*	*	*
Eating And Drinking Places	20	154	-9	23
Trucking And Warehousing	33	146	-13	14
Food Stores	4	128	5	*
Environmental Quality And Housing	*	*	*	*

*data suppressed to maintain confidentiality

Top 10 Employers

Company	Product or Service	Size
Bemis Industries	Plastic Products	50-99
Forest Co. Potawatomi	Tribal Unit	50-99
Schaefer Enterprises	Department Store	100-249
Nicolet Hardwoods	Hardwood Products	50-99
Sokaogan Gaming	Gaming, entertainment	50-99
Superior Floor	Flooring	100-249
Laona State Bank	Banking, etc.	20-49
Nu-Roc Community Health Care	Medical	50-99
Novak Trucking	Shipping	20-49
Laona Shurfine	Food and Related	20-49

Source: WI DWD, Bureau of Workforce Information Bureau, ES-202 file tape, 1st quarter 1999 and LMI benchmark 2000.



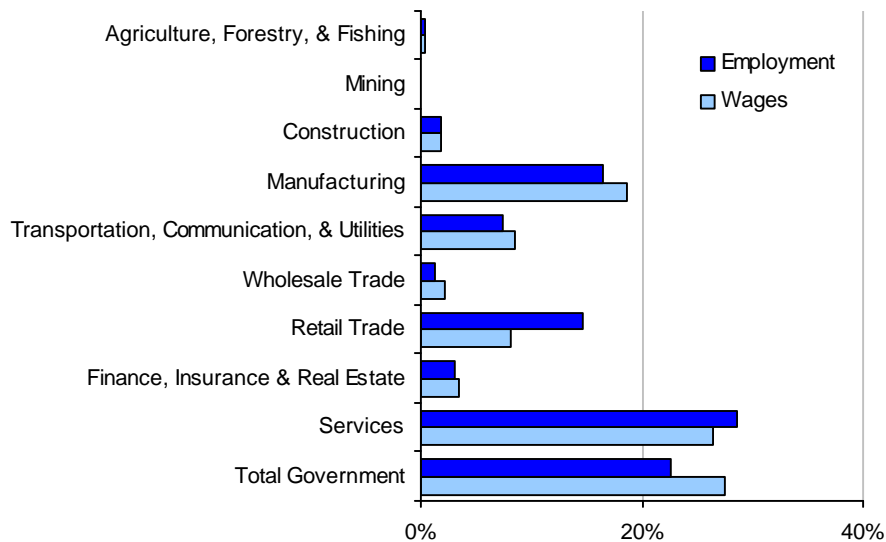
When one looks at the industrial landscape of Forest County, one of the most obvious features is the relatively small size of individual businesses. The larger employers in the county have between 50 and 100 employees, with only a couple showing between 100-250 or so. The majority showing less than 50 workers. This is what one would expect in a smaller labor market such as that of Forest County.

The larger private sector employers are a cross section of the industrial spectrum - manufacturing, service, trade, transportation. This variety is a healthy condition in any labor market.

Forest County Employment and Wages 1999

	Annual Average Wage	State Average Wage	Percent of State Average	Percent change 1 year	Percent change 5 year	Number of Workers
All Industries	\$19,243	\$29,609	65.0%	6.1%	24.0%	3,106
Agriculture, Forestry, & Fishing	\$16,140	\$21,499	75.1%	*	-28.2%	13
Mining	*	\$39,968	*	*	*	*
Construction	\$17,804	\$36,772	48.4%	2.4%	33.2%	58
Manufacturing	\$21,897	\$37,773	58.0%	5.5%	17.1%	510
Transportation, Communications, & Utilities	\$21,995	\$34,523	63.7%	9.3%	16.8%	230
Wholesale Trade	\$30,672	\$38,048	80.6%	5.6%	28.5%	42
Retail Trade	\$10,559	\$15,066	70.1%	3.6%	27.0%	457
Finance, Insurance, & Real estate	\$20,634	\$37,911	54.4%	5.8%	23.4%	97
Services	\$17,686	\$26,041	67.9%	13.2%	21.8%	890
Total Government	\$23,423	\$32,017	73.2%	4.9%	28.8%	703

Total Employment and Wage Distribution by Industry Division



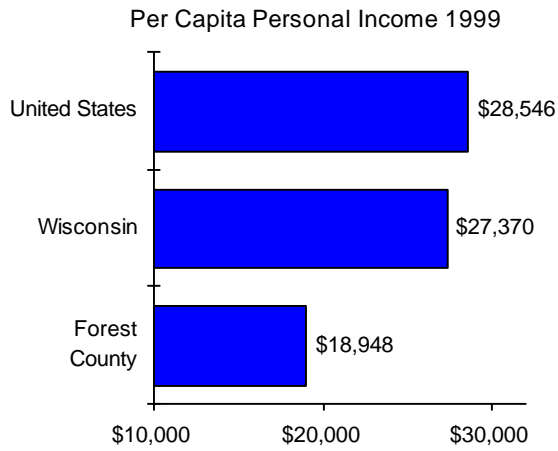
Source: WI DWD, Bureau of Workforce Information, *Employment, Wages and Taxes Due covered by Wisconsin's U.C. Law, Tables 209-211.*

When looking at the table at the top of the page, the one thing that seems to stand out is the forth column, indicating the percent of the state average wage paid in different industries in Forest County. The wage levels in Forest County are almost uniformly about 30-40 percent below those paid workers across the state as a whole. In a smaller northern rural county in Wisconsin, it would not be surprising that there are going to be some differences in pay, but the actual differences here may be among some of the greatest in the state.

Manufacturing employment, traditionally in the higher levels of pay in any given labor market, has an average annual wage in Forest County well below that of the state average. Transportation and utilities, another high paying industrial category in most areas of the state, comes in at only about 64 percent of the state average. Occupational elements of this sector would be local hauling, pulp truck hauling, and others, which in this part of the state, often pay close to minimum wage or just above.

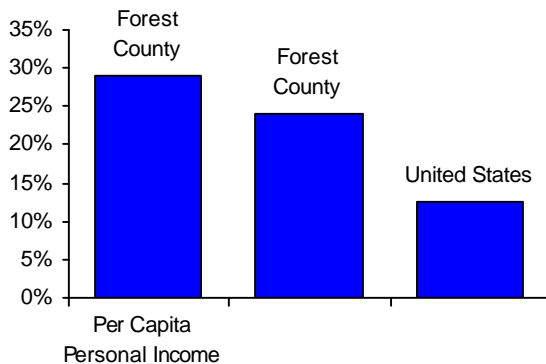
Construction employment, which is one of the highest paying among the blue collar occupations throughout the state, pays rather poorly in Forest County. Compensation for building workers is just a little less than half that of the state average. This may be due to the fact that construction outfits here are small operations, with 3-5 employees, and seldom pay near union scale.

Forest County Wage and Income Data



Per capita income is total income divided by the total number of residents. Income includes wages earned, dividends from investments, and transfer payments from the government. Per capita income can be influenced by average family size and the median age of the residents. Per capita income can influence the type of services and housing available within a county.

Over the past five years, Forest County per capita income has increased by about 33 percentage points and wages earned in Forest County have increased by about 26 percent. Nonetheless, the per capita income level in this county is well below the state and national levels, by about \$4,000. This is a wide gap, and one that is typical of the less densely populated rural counties of the state. When one considers the fact that prices for most goods and services are fairly uniform throughout the state, whether transportation costs, food, apparel, etc., it is clear that this places the residents of Forest County at a disadvantage compared to the residents of other areas of the state, especially the more heavily industrialized south east.



Wages paid for work within a county can impact the type of goods and services which may be purchased. Examining wage structures can be an important part of the hiring process for both job seekers and employers.

	Per Capita Personal Income						Percent Change	
	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	1 year	5 year
United States	\$22,581	\$23,562	\$24,651	\$25,874	\$27,321	\$28,546	4.5%	26.4%
Wisconsin	\$21,699	\$22,573	\$23,554	\$24,791	\$26,227	\$27,370	4.4%	26.1%
Forest County	\$14,692	\$15,454	\$16,316	\$17,372	\$18,016	\$18,948	5.2%	29.0%

Source: U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, Regional Economic Information System.

Selected Occupational Wage Data

	Mean	Median
Administrative Secretary	\$13.20	\$14.00
Assembler	\$9.14	\$8.63
Cooks, Short Order	\$6.84	\$6.46
Driver/Sales Workers	\$10.29	\$10.73
Janitors & Cleaners	\$7.91	\$7.30
Machine Feeders & Offbearers	\$8.95	\$8.44
Welders & Cutters	\$12.99	\$13.05
Recreation Workers	\$7.52	\$8.20
Construction Carpenter	\$6.50	\$7.50
Food Preparation Workers	\$6.65	\$6.14
General Office Clerk	\$8.82	\$8.59
Licensed Practical Nurse	\$13.03	\$12.94
Salesperson, Retail	\$7.50	\$8.00
Nursing Aides, Orderlies, etc.	\$7.83	\$6.37

The mean wage is the sum of all wages divided by the number of wage earners; this is often referred to as an "average". The median wage is the midpoint of all wages; there are exactly the same number of wage earners above and below this wage. If the mean and median are relatively close the labor market for that particular worker is probably tight or very competitive.

Wages in Forest County, especially in the trade, service, and manufacturing sectors, will not compare well to most of the occupations listed at left (from the district survey, all counties). In fact, pay levels near minimum are not uncommon for entry-level and low skill occupations.

Source: WI DWD, BWI. 1998 OES Wage Survey, Wausau, WI